

York University  
Procedures for Decanal Searches  
Updated January 2018

Attracting capable Deans is critical to advancing the institutional priorities and mandate of York University. The York Act vests in the President the power to recommend to the Board the appointment of officers of the University (13 (2) d). Under the terms of the current Collective Agreement with YUFA, the importance of collegial participation in the selection of academic administrators and Librarian Administrators is acknowledged in 12.27 (b): *Unless otherwise agreed to between the President and the Faculty Council of the Faculty in question, candidates for appointment as Deans or Principals shall be recommended to the President by search committees established by and advisory to the President, a majority of which have been elected by Faculty Council, and a majority of the members of which are full-time faculty members.*

In light of feedback from the York community and following a review of current practices at other leading Canadian universities, the Procedures for Decanal Searches are being updated, effective immediately.

University Procedures for Decanal Searches

The Deans/Principal play a crucial role in the academic leadership and governance of the university, as well as in the direction and administration of their Faculties and the promotion of teaching and research in those Faculties. It is therefore essential that a decanal search canvas widely to attract candidates who are best qualified for the position in relation to leadership and administrative capacities and experience and scholarly reputation.

The following general procedures shall govern all searches for Faculty Deans, Principal, and, as applicable, the Dean of Libraries. At the outset of a given search, any further specific or supplemental procedures may be agreed upon between the President and the Faculty Council Executive and presented to Faculty Council for approval.

1. The President initiates a search by communication with Faculty Council normally 14 months before the end of the incumbent Dean's/Principal's term, or in the case of an unanticipated vacancy, as soon as possible.
2. Faculty Council normally elects 6 full-time faculty members, one staff and two student members (one undergraduate and one graduate student).
3. Ensuring the best possible outcome will be facilitated by a Search Committee that reflects the breadth and diversity of the Faculty. Each Council should therefore establish procedures reflecting the following principles:
  - a. A Search Committee should have some representation from full-time faculty members with familiarity of the job of Dean – that is, with academic administrative experience – typically no fewer than two colleagues who have been or who are currently chairs or directors of departments, or in non-departmentalized

Faculties, members of the senior administrative team such as previous Associate Deans, UPDs, or GPDs.

- b. Search Committees should broadly reflect the diversity of academic departments including at least one member from each department if possible, and if not, normally no department should have more than one member on the Search Committee; in non-departmentalized faculties, the Committee should broadly reflect the program areas or fields in the Faculty.
  - c. Search Committees should also reflect broadly the gender and demographic diversity of the Faculty.
4. Faculties with a significant proportion of contract faculty or who may desire to have an external member such as an alumnus may request adding an additional member to the Search Committee representing contract faculty, alumnus, etc. (to be agreed upon with the President).
  5. The President appoints one member drawn from outside the Faculty concerned but who is familiar with the Faculty.
  6. The President also names the Chair of the Search Committee, normally the Provost; names a non-voting secretary, normally an experienced senior staff member from outside the Faculty; may retain a Search Consultant to assist the Committee; and formally establishes the Search Committee as a committee advisory to the President, whose mandate is to conduct a search for a new Dean/Principal, in accordance with the agreed-upon procedures, and to recommend to the President, by a specified date, the best-qualified candidate(s) for Dean/Principal.
  7. The Search Committee is responsible for preparing the position profile drawing on input from Faculty Council and in consultation with the President.
  8. The Search Committee will advertise the position in university publications and, if external nominations are being sought, may advertise in national and international professional publications. The Search Committee may also solicit recommendations for the position.
  9. The Search Committee assesses and screens applicants/nominees, and conducts interviews. The names of all the candidates considered at any stage, including the list of those interviewed, shall be kept confidential to the Search Committee and the Consultant. By agreeing to serve on the Committee, all members agree to be bound by these requirements of confidentiality.
  10. The Search Committee prepares its recommendations for the President, identifying the candidate or candidates who present the knowledge, skills and capacities to undertake the responsibilities of Dean/Principal. The Committee may, if it wishes, rank order candidates.
  11. The President consults with the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors which may act on behalf of the Board in appointing the candidate or may recommend the appointment to the Board, at its next regular meeting.
  12. The President announces the name of the new Dean/Principal to the Faculty and the Board of Governors, and subsequently to the wider York community.

### Pilot Provision (2017 – 2019) for Open Searches

For Faculties wishing to incorporate an open stage into their search, the following is being provided as a pilot for searches in 2017 - 2018 and 2018 – 2019 to be reviewed before incorporating as a standing option.

Where a Faculty Council indicates a preference for an open search, an open stage may be added to the process after the Search Committee has interviewed its shortlisted candidates confidentially and has identified its top ranked candidates – normally the top two ranked candidates. In order to ensure that York has access to the very best candidates, the Consultant (or if there is no Consultant, the Secretary to the Committee) will ask the top ranked candidates whether they are willing to meet with Faculty Council. That information will be kept in confidence by the Search Consultant (or Secretary).

If both/all the top ranked candidates agree to do so, they will be invited to present to a closed session of Faculty Council. The Search Committee will solicit input from Faculty Council about those candidates and consider this input in their final rankings to be presented to the President. In this event, all members of Faculty Council agree to be bound by the same requirements of confidentiality as the Search Committee. Council members will provide input to the Search Committee but members of Council will be expected to keep the names of the candidates confidential in perpetuity.

If any of the top ranked candidates indicate a requirement for a confidential search, the open stage will not occur for any candidate. The Consultant will report to the Search Committee that at least one candidate requires a confidential search, without disclosing which candidate or candidates have not agreed to meet with Faculty Council. The Search Committee will in any respect consult extensively with Faculty Council about the position profile for the Dean, and provide regular updates throughout the search.

Whether or not the search proceeds to an open stage, the top ranked candidates will also meet with the President, and the Search Committee may elect to hold follow-up interviews with them.